

Wound Care After CO2 Laser Surgery

General Instructions

Keep the wound covered for one day, if possible.

You may bathe or shower after 24 hours. Do not soak the wound.

Changing the Dressing

You should change the dressing after 24 hours. Change it 3 times a day, until the edges of the wound have grown in and completely covered the wound. You should also change the dressing whenever it is wet from the wound drainage. Expect medium to large amounts of clear to yellowish drainage. This should last for several days. It is normal. It is not a sign of infection.

The nurse will go over these steps with you before you leave. Follow these steps when changing your dressing:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. Dry using a clean towel.
2. Remove the dressing and throw it away.
3. Gently clean the wound using soap and water. Clean the area until the crust is removed. If thick crusts form, remove them using wet soaks. Apply a very wet washcloth to the crust for 10 minutes. Repeat as needed until all crusts are softened and gently removed. Do not pick at the wound.
4. Blot dry, using a clean, dry towel or air dry.
5. Apply a thin film of _____ on the wound and on the edges of the skin around the wound.
6. Cover the wound with a non-adherent dressing.

Do not let a thick crust or scab form. The wound will heal faster if it does not have a scab and if it is kept moist with ointment. Reapply ointment whenever wound looks dry.

Things to Watch For

Pain

You may feel some discomfort for three to four days after your laser surgery. Regular Tylenol will usually help take care of any pain you feel.

Bleeding

If your wound starts to bleed while you are changing your dressing or at any other time, apply constant pressure to it for 15 minutes. This will stop the bleeding. If the bleeding does not stop after applying pressure, call the clinic or Urgent Care at the numbers listed below.

Infection

Infection is very rare in an open wound. If you notice any signs of infection:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Pain
- Tenderness
- Fever
- A large amount of pus

call the phone number given below. By taking proper care of the wound, you will reduce this small risk of infection and help your wound heal more quickly.

Healing

It usually takes two to six weeks for the new skin to completely cover the wound. Healing time depends on the size of the wound, where it is and how quickly you heal. It is normal for the wound to get red at the edges and for the new skin to be pink and red. With time, this will fade and become flesh tone or white.

Your new skin will be pink for about three months. If the treated area is in the sun, it may burn easily. Use a sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 or higher. If your lip was treated, use a lip sunscreen. You should also wear a hat when you are in the sun.

Problems/Questions

If you have any problems or questions, call the Dermatology Clinic at (612) 467- 5524. Before 8:00 a.m., after 4:30 p.m., on holidays, and on weekends call Urgent Care at 1-866-687-7382 (1866-NURSEVA).

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